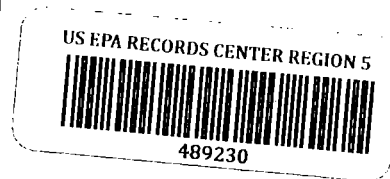


Downers Grove Groundwater Investigation

Fact Sheet #1 August 2001



Downers Grove, Illinois

Background

During the spring of 2001, the Illinois EPA began a groundwater investigation just east of I-355 near Downers Grove. This investigation is in response to citizen concerns related to recent private well sampling in neighboring Lisle. Results of a few samples in Downers Grove in May showed some solvent contamination in scattered wells. Consequently, Illinois EPA decided to initiate a separate investigation in Downers Grove to identify contaminated wells and potential sources.

The Illinois EPA collected samples from private water wells in unincorporated Downers Grove during the week of July 16, 2001. The results from these samples constitute the first phase of the Downers Grove Groundwater Investigation. In this first round of sampling, approximately 160 wells, in three areas were analyzed for levels of solvent-type chemicals, known as volatile organic chemicals (VOCs).

What areas were sampled in the first round of the Downers Grove Groundwater Investigation?

Area 1) Elmore and Inverness generally bound the main study area on the north, Belmont on the east, 59th Street on the south and Walnut on the west.

Area 2) A second area is north of Burlington between Granville and Edwards, and generally extends about one block north and south.

Area 3) The third area tested is bounded by 63rd on the north, Main on the east, 67th on the south and Saratoga on the west.

Area Map (JPG 200K file)

What did the test results for the July sampling show?

The larger, main area (#1) shows that some wells contain tetrachloroethylene (PCE), trichloroethylene (TCE) and other related VOCs. Some wells in this area show PCE or TCE above the federal drinking water standards.

Sample results from the two smaller areas mentioned above (#2 and #3) were well below the drinking water standard or the chemicals of concern were not detected.

Do you know the source of the contamination?

No, we do not have enough information yet to identify the source(s) of contamination. We are conducting an area-wide investigation to determine the nature and extent of contamination and possible source(s) of contamination.

What are the levels of VOCs in the main study area?

Of the approximately 100 samples in this area (#1), 34 results were greater than the federal drinking water standards for public water supplies, which are five parts per billion for both PCE and TCE. (Although these standards are not enforceable for private wells, Illinois EPA and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) use them as a comparison level regarding the safety of private water wells). Other VOCs were detected at lower levels.

Should well owners drink the water?

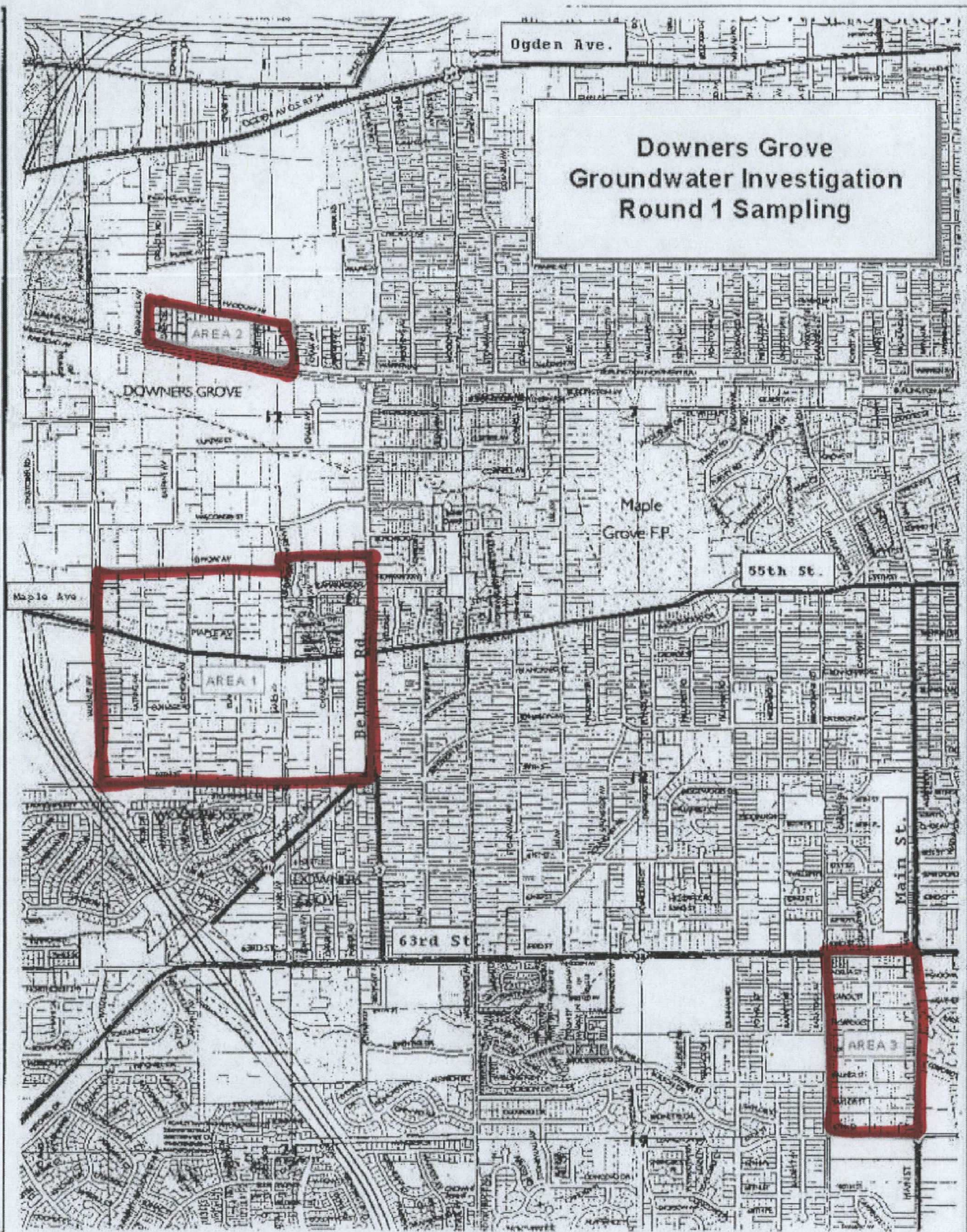
The Illinois Department of Public Health recommends that owners of wells containing TCE and PCE at or greater than the standards not use their wells as a source of drinking water.

If contamination is found in my well, will the state force me to change over to a public water supply?

Neither Illinois EPA nor Illinois Department of Public Health would "force" a citizen to abandon a private well. IDPH will advise residents of any well contamination and make recommendations about changes in water use. Private wells are the domain of the well owner.

What adverse health effects are related to exposure to TCE or PCE?

Exposure to levels of TCE and PCE much greater than those levels found in Downers Grove area wells can cause nausea, dizziness or headaches. Exposure to low levels over long periods may lead to impaired immune system function and may increase the risk of kidney or liver cancer or other



Downers Grove Township and Lisle Township Map